Moreland Avenue just north of I-20

3.3 MORELAND AVENUE/MORELAND LCI

The vision for Moreland Avenue and the Moreland LCI area includes transforming Moreland Avenue from a neighborhood barrier into a corridor that enriches and connects neighborhoods and providing neighborhood-scaled transportation facilities.

Transportation Recommendations

Moreland Avenue is a unique roadway in that it is a major north-south arterial with direct Interstate connectivity city, while having residential and neighborhood commercial activities that front it. The challenge is to provide improvements that facilitate pedestrian and other mode circulation activities and support redevelopment efforts while not compromising vehicular operational efficiency and capacity.

Today Walthall Street terminates at a fence and is a barrier for drivers, bicyclists and, most notably, those in wheelchairs

These recommendations are organized into Street & Block Patterns, Traffic Systems, Transit, Pedestrian Systems, and Bicycle Facilities.

Street and Block Pattern Recommendations

The interconnected street system and the small blocks should be preserved and protected in the Study Area. They provide multi-modal accessibility and are part of what makes the area urban.

Street and Block Pattern Policies

- Prohibit street abandonments or closures as part of new development, unless new streets are created with equal or greater connectivity to the existing street grid.
- Utilize traffic calming to minimize the impacts of cut through traffic on neighborhoods, rather than street closures.

Street and Block Pattern Projects

- Reconnect Walthall Street to Seaboard Avenue. (MT-42)

  The construction of MARTA separated the Reynoldstown neighborhood from its MARTA Station from a vehicular and bicycle perspective. By building a ramp from Walthall Street to the MARTA kiss-ride lot, the two could be reconnected.

Mixed-use settings can promote walking for short trips

Traffic System Recommendations

A variety of factors comprise traffic systems and include intersection operations, light timings, turning movements, volume, capacity, and speeds. For Moreland Avenue/Moreland LCI, the following road improvement recommendations are intended to: enhance the efficiency of intersections; reduce car/pedestrian con ict; improve roadway safety, and make it advantageous for drivers to drive the speed limit.

In traditional urbanism alleys were used for back-of-house functions

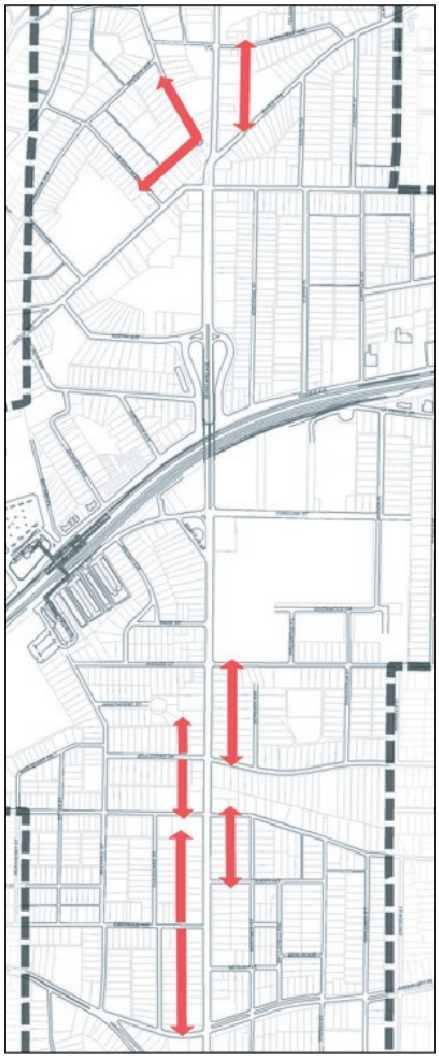


Figure 3.17: *Map showing where private alleys may be feasible*

Traffic System Policies

- Encourage high density housing within walking distance of retail and transit to reduce the need to drive.
- Limit vehicular access to alleys and side streets via zoning requirements.
- Require access management with new development, which may include right-in/right-out islands and shared driveways.
- Amend Public Works standards to permit new multifamily and commercial uses to use existing alleys.
- Amend Public Works standards to remove the requirement for alleys and driveways to be set 7 feet from side property lines, even if zoning permits it.
- Work with GDOT to ensure that acceleration and deceleration lanes are not required on new developments if access must be provided from Moreland Avenue.

Traffic System Projects

- Install a southbound left hand turn signal on Briarcliff Road. (MT-8)

  As north-south and east-west arterials, Moreland and Ponce de Leon Avenues, respectively, carry large volumes of traffic not only during the peak commuting periods but throughout the day. One of the conditions that contributes to operating deficiencies at the intersection is the lack of left turn lanes on Moreland Avenue, while another is the short westbound left turn lane on Ponce de Leon Avenue. The northbound left is given a leading left turn arrow before southbound traffic is allowed to flow, but this does not adequately accommodate the left turns. If after that protected left turn phasing a vehicle wants to turn left, they have to wait for a gap in the opposing direction of traffic. If traffic is heavy, the left turn cannot be accomplished, and this lane ultimately does not carry any through volumes. A potential solution to address left turning traffic that was considered in this study was to widen Moreland Avenue to create left turn lanes.

  A traffic study performed in 2003 indicated that for future traffic volumes (Year 2007), the Moreland Avenue/Ponce de Leon Avenue intersection would operate at Level of Service (LOS) E during the morning peak period and LOS F during the evening peak period. With the addition of left turn lanes on Moreland Avenue, plus an eastbound right turn lane on Ponce de Leon Avenue, the intersection would operate at LOS D during both morning and evening peak periods.

  Building these lanes would be a challenge. Acquisition

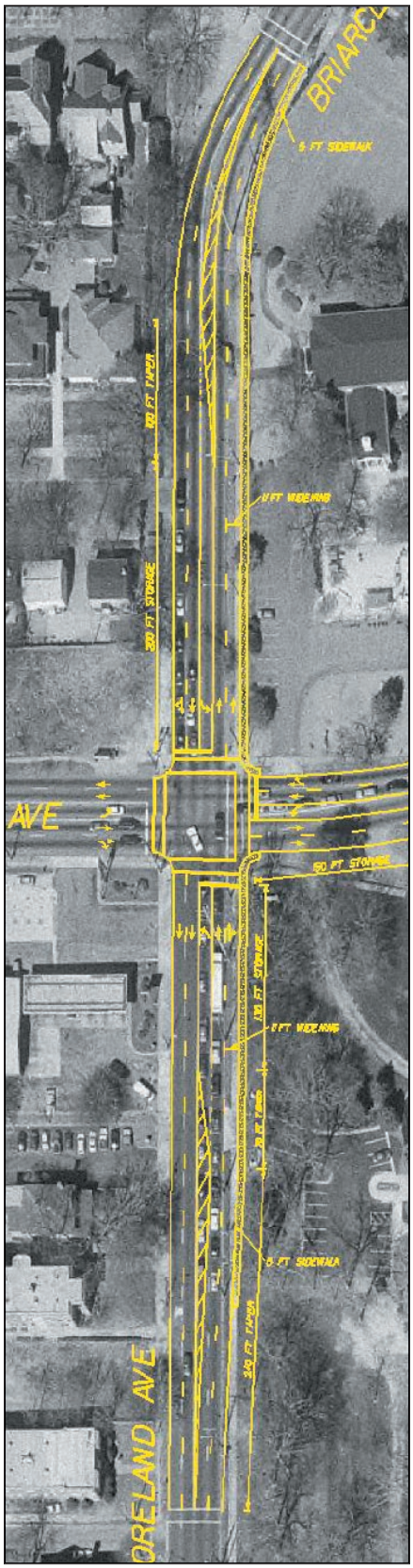


Figure 3.18: *Option A for the Ponce de Leon/Briarcliff Road intersection*

of the necessary right-of-way would be extremely difficult, with a church on the northeast corner, residences on the northwest corner, a gas station on the southwest corner, and an institutional facility on the southeast corner. Furthermore, electrical transmission lines on Moreland Avenue's east side south of Ponce de Leon Avenue would need to be relocated. Mature trees would also need to be removed and the pedestrian crossing distance increased.

Two techniques to provide left turn lanes to minimize overall impacts were considered: A) asymmetric widening (for example 3 feet to the west and 8 feet to the east); and B) all of the widening on the east. Neither included extending the left turn lane into the Druid Hills neighborhood. However, because of impacts on adjacent land uses, adding left turns lanes is not recommended at this time.

Instead, a left turn phase for southbound Briarcliff Road traffic that mirror the operation for northbound Moreland Avenue should be installed. The difference would be that the southbound left phase would come at the end of the green phase; this is referred to as a "lagging left". The north and south traffic movements would be: northbound left and through for Moreland (Moreland getting the left turn arrow) while southbound Briarcliff is stopped; northbound and southbound move concurrently (no left turn arrows); southbound left and through for Briarcliff (Briarcliff getting the left turn arrow) while northbound Moreland is stopped.

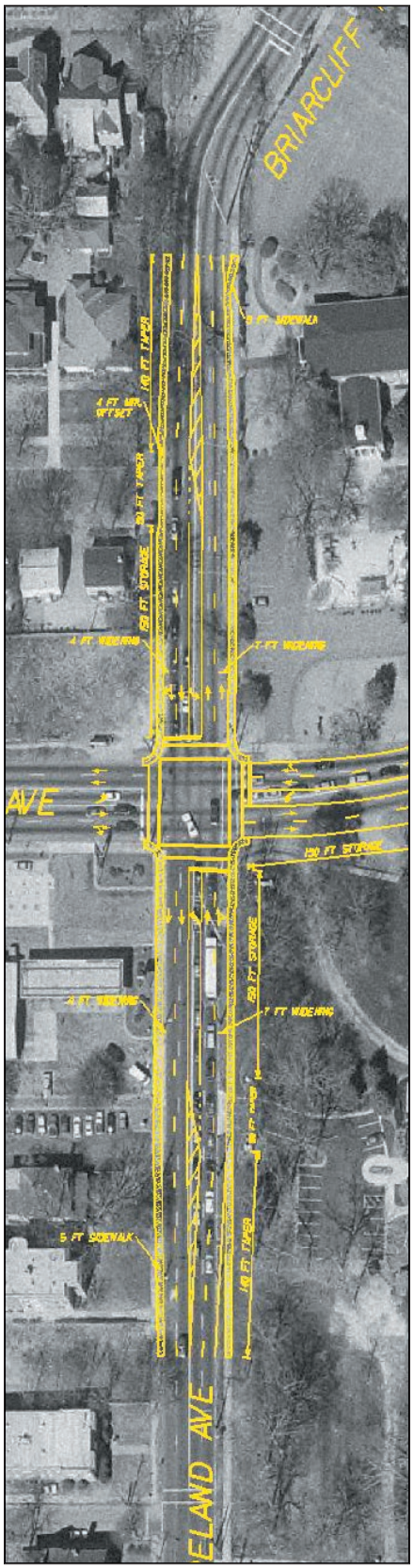


Figure 3.19: *Option B for the Ponce de Leon/Briarcliff Road intersection*

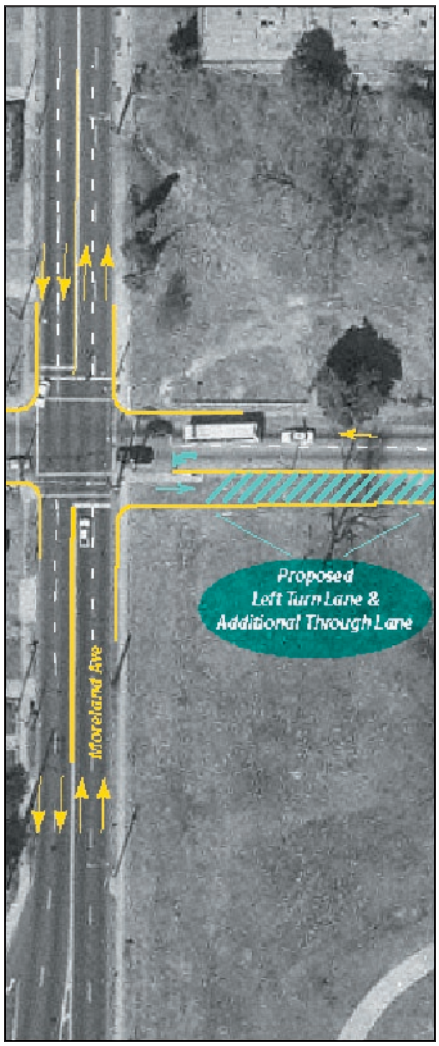


Figure 3.20: *The North Avenue/ Moreland Avenue intersection should be improved with signage and limited peak hour left turns onto North Avenue; a left hand turn lane onto Moreland from the east may be a future option, but is not recommended at this time due to its potential impacts on Freedom Pa Park*

- Perform follow-up study of Ponce de Leon and Briarcliff Road intersection signal upgrades. (MT-9)

  After upgrades have been in-place for at least one year, a follow-up intersection study should be performed to identify the impact (to both current and predicted operations) of the changes for all approaches.

  Depending on the outcome of the intersection study and the benefits of signal changes, the option to pursue a higher-impact solution that may include dedicated left-turn lanes could be considered. Such solution would need to review public comments and issues identified in this study, and ***must result in a recommendation with broad community support.***

- Install signage to direct northbound Moreland Avenue traffic wanting to turn left at North and Ponce de Leon Avenues to use Freedom Parkway; prohibit left turns are peak hours; and monitor conditions after completion of the Moreland and Ponce de Leon Avenues signalization project. (MT-10)

  North Avenue is another east-west roadway providing direct access from the study into Midtown. The Moreland Avenue intersection at North Avenue is similar to the one at Ponce de Leon Avenue in that there are not separate northbound and southbound left turn lanes.

  As with the intersection at Ponce de Leon and Moreland Avenues, neighborhood participants asked that the addition of left turn lanes not be recommended due to the land required from the Freedom Park. As an alternative solution, signage redirecting left turning traffic before it reaches this intersection was proposed. This would benefit both this intersection and the larger one to the north.

  For northbound Moreland Avenue traffic destined to the west, either Midtown, I-75/I-85, or other destinations, east-west route options are Freedom Parkway, North Avenue, and Ponce de Leon Avenue. A left turn lane and protective-permissive left turn signal phasing exists at Freedom Parkway.

  A methodology that should be employed to improve operations at North Avenue is to prohibit left hand turns at peak hours and direct/sign northbound Moreland Avenue traffic to turn at Freedom Parkway for use North Avenue and Ponce de Leon Avenue access. This should use static signing, i.e. regular metal signs. If the desired effect is not achieved, electronically illuminated signs could be installed.

  A proposal from some study participants expressed interest

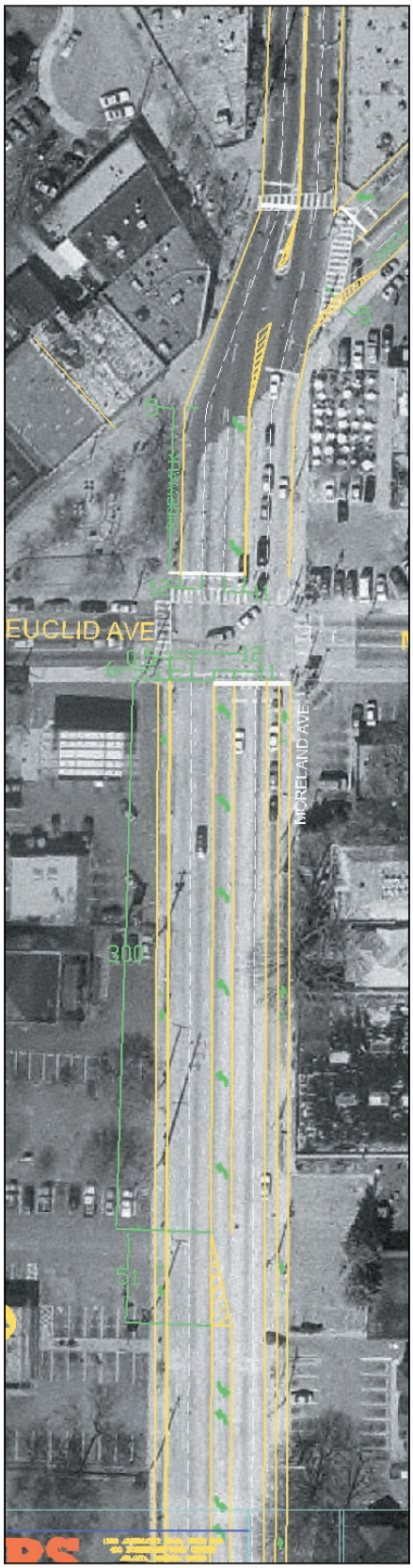


Figure 3.21: *Proposed lane reduction south of Little Five Points*

in adding a left turn lane on North Avenue for those headed south on Moreland. The right-of-way acquisition could include property from a currently undeveloped tract in the northeast corner of the intersection but there would still be property required from Freedom Park and there may be impacts to the property on the northwest corner that would complicate the design (see figure at left). As such, a left turn lane onto Moreland Avenue is not recommended at this time.

- Convert Mansfield to two-way street west of Moreland Avenue for the first 100 feet. (MT-13)
- Eliminate curb cuts in front of Starbucks. (MT-51)

  Project MT-51 must only be done if MT-13 is implemented.
- Conduct a warrant study of a mid-block traffic signal between Mansfield and Euclid Avenues. (MT-14)

  A signal at this location is recommended by this study, but first requires a warrant study. The location represents the highest number of mid-block pedestrian crossings on the corridor. With 800 feet between existing signals and the existence of retail and services on both sides of the avenue, many pedestrians cross mid-block rather than go up to ten minutes out of there way.

  A warrant study must take into consideration the urban context, pedestrian crossing volumes, impacts on the elderly and person with disabilities, traffic conditions, and the ability of said light to support other improvements identified below.
- Install a mid-block traffic signal between Mansfield and Euclid Avenues. (MT-44)
- Consolidate driveways between Mansfield and Euclid Avenues. (MT-15)

  Project MT-15 must only be done if MT-44 is implemented.
- Install signs to prohibit left turns into businesses between Euclid and Mansfield Avenues. (MT-16)

  Project MT-16 must only be done if MT-44 is implemented.
- Reconstruct both Euclid Avenue approaches at Moreland Avenue by removing southbound right turn lane and adding bulb out on Euclid Avenue east of Moreland. (MT-12)

  An issue identified during public outreach is pedestrian safety at the existing crosswalks in Little Five Points. It is desirable to augment the safety of the crossings at both legs of Euclid Avenue. For southbound Moreland traffic it is proposed to remove the right turn lane onto westbound Euclid Avenue and use the left over space to create extra wide sidewalks.

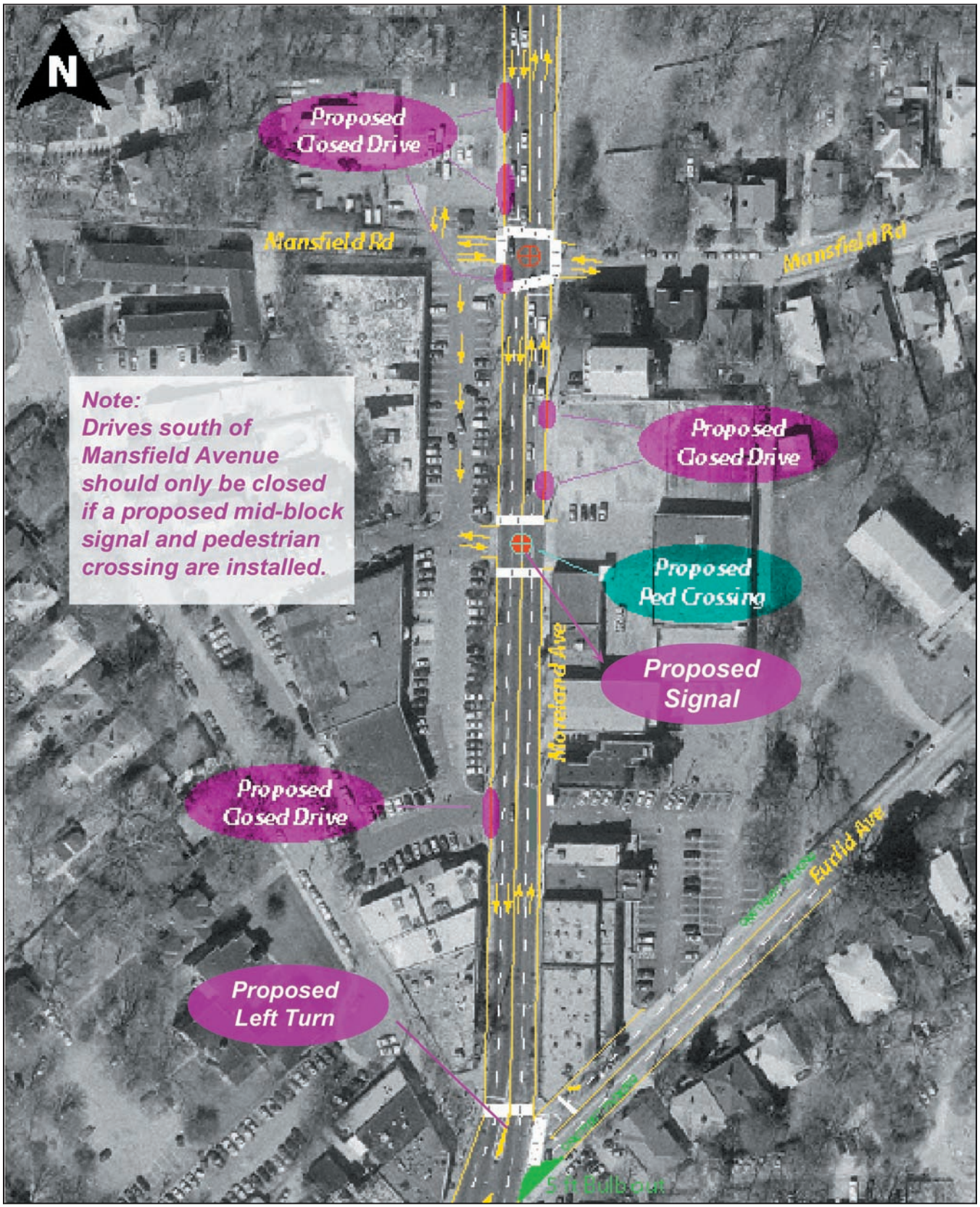


Figure 3.22: *Proposed roadway and pedestrian improvements in the Little Five Points area*
See Pedestrian Recommendations for more details

The reconfiguration of the western leg of the DeKalb/Moreland Avenues jug-handle would be enhanced by the addition of an Olmsted-inspired pocket park, such as this one in Forest Hills Gardens in New York

Furthermore, a bulb-out on Euclid Avenue eastbound is proposed to slow northbound traffic, which takes this y-intersection at high speeds because of the ease of the turning movement. A bulb-out would force traffic to take the turn at slightly lower speeds, thereby improving pedestrian safety. It would also support southbound left turn movements.

- Allow southbound left turns onto Euclid Avenue. (MT-50)

  Project MT-50 must only be done if MT-44 is implemented.

- Reduce Moreland Avenue between McLendon Avenue and DeKalb Avenue from six lanes to four lanes with a center turn lane plus bike lanes. (MT-5)

- Reconfigure the Jug-handle intersection with DeKalb Avenue by narrowing ramp entrances and install a traffic signal on Moreland Avenue, signage and lighting. (MT-11)

  A unique transportation aspect of the Moreland Avenue corridor is the ramp connections to DeKalb Avenue, often referred to as the "Jug Handles". The configuration is unique in that the northbound approaching and departing volumes must use the east ramps and the southbound approaching and departing volumes must use the west ramps. With damaged or missing signage, this configuration can lead to confusion especially for the DeKalb Avenue traffic.

  Although alterations to these ramps has generated a lot of public input, a traffic study performed in November 2004 indicated that for future traffic volumes (Year 2007), the ramp intersections with DeKalb Avenue would operate at acceptable Level of Services during both peak periods. The interest to redesign these ramps entails more a desire to match the scale of surrounding neighborhoods as opposed to a need to address operational deficiencies.

  Alternative solutions for these ramps generated a tremendous amount of input from the community. Solutions such as completely closing one ramp or the other tended to pit the residents adjacent to the ramp against each other. From the most recent public involvement meetings, there appears to be some consensus among a number of the community members that keeps both ramps open but orients the accessing maneuvers from DeKalb Avenue to Moreland Avenue via the east ramp.

  There are two major modifications to the existing configuration. The first is that the median would be extended on DeKalb Avenue across the opening for the west ramp so that left turns to and from DeKalb Avenue are prohibited. One circulation aspect this addresses is to discourage traffic

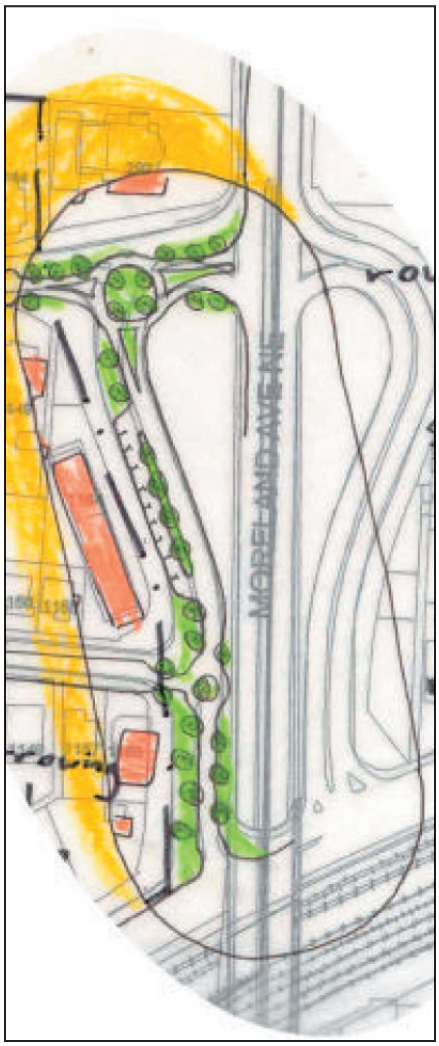


Figure 3.23: *This study embraces the Inman Park Traffic Calming Plan's call for narrowing the western left of the jug handle, shown above*

that wants to proceed eastbound on DeKalb Avenue from cutting through the neighborhood and using Austin Avenue and Alta Avenue to get to the ramp. To provide access for the southbound Moreland Avenue traffic to DeKalb Avenue, the median at the ramps on Moreland Avenue would have to be removed and Moreland Avenue would have to be re-striped/reconfigured to provide a southbound left turn lane. This striping can be accomplished with the recommended reconfiguration for the bicycle lanes between DeKalb Avenue and McLendon Avenue. To facilitate this new southbound left turn maneuver, as well as the left turns from the east ramp to turn left and proceed south, a traffic signal is anticipated. An additional benefit of the traffic signal will be to provide a safer system for walkers to cross Moreland Avenue by having a crosswalk and pedestrian actuated signal phasing.

An important aspect of this redesign is that the west ramp at Moreland Avenue continues to be right-in/right-out. Not allowing straight through maneuvers also discourages traffic cutting through Austin Avenue and Alta Avenue to ultimately proceed eastbound on DeKalb Avenue.

Input from community members during the public outreach efforts was that a consistent source of motorist confusion is that directional signs continue to be damaged and/or knocked down. Regardless of what project moves forward, consideration must be given to installing overhead directional signs and lighting on DeKalb Avenue. Strategically located mast arm poles with hanging signs can accomplish this.

In conjunction with these changes, the community also expressed a desire to reduce ramp lane widths. With parking currently on the west side of the west ramp, interest was expressed in building bulb-outs at the ends of the parking area. For the east ramps, an option exists to widen the existing median and increase plantings.

In an effort to promote alternate modes, bike lanes can be installed on the east side of the east ramp.

- Remove eastbound free right on Seaboard Avenue. (MT-7)

  During the public outreach efforts, community members expressed safety concerns with the speed of eastbound Seaboard Avenue traffic using the right turn lane to proceed south on Moreland Avenue. In addition, pedestrians have to cross this lane to get to a channelizing island before crossing Moreland Avenue. The alternative proffered was to eliminate the right turn lane and reconstruct the island as part of a continuous sidewalk system. Brantley Street is still available for MARTA buses to proceed south on Moreland Avenue.

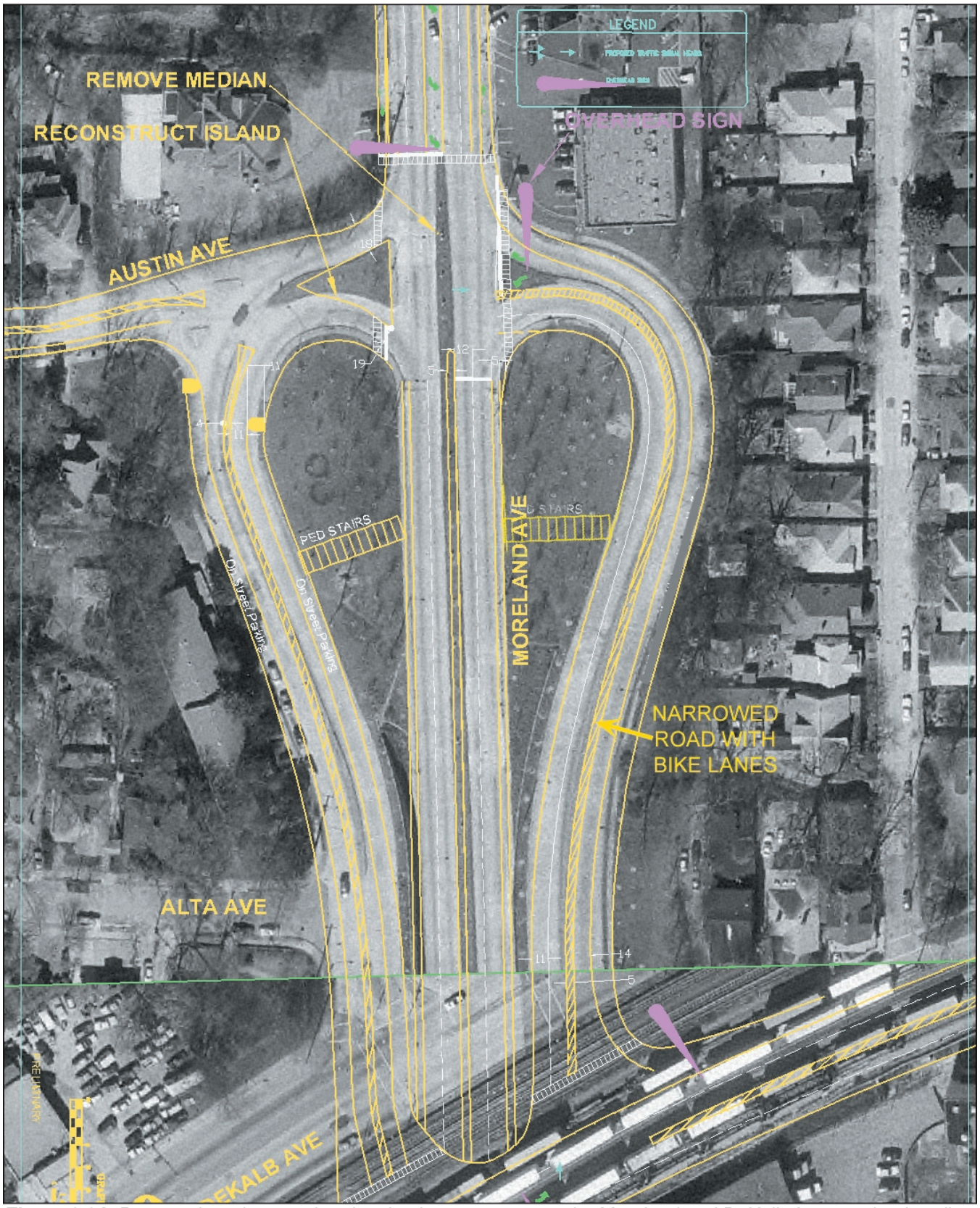
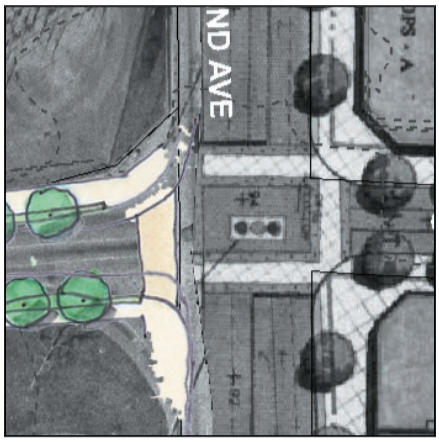


Figure 3.24: *Proposed roadway and pedestrian improvements at the Moreland and DeKalb Avenues jug-handle*



Removing the free right at Seaboard Avenue (at left) would create a better pedestrian route from the Inman Park/Reynoldstown MARTA station to the Edgewood Retail District

- Conduct a detailed study of the I-20 interchange. (MT-23)

  For trips of longer distances, Interstates will be part of the long haul route. A convenient way to access I-20, which can be utilized to get to I-285 and I-75/I-85, is via the Moreland Avenue interchange. As residential and commercial development continues in the area, traffic volumes will continue to increase at this facility. With this anticipated growth, safety will be lessened and delays will increase. One technique to address this situation is to install traffic signals.

  Traffic volumes also appear to exit the ramps at higher speeds than what is posted. This creates an undesirable situation for pedestrians. Options that can be considered for alerting motorists are to install over-sized "State Law Stop for Pedestrian in Crosswalk" signs and possibly rumble strips.

- Convert the third southbound lane between Hardee Street and Arkwright Place into a median/center turn lane. (MT-25)

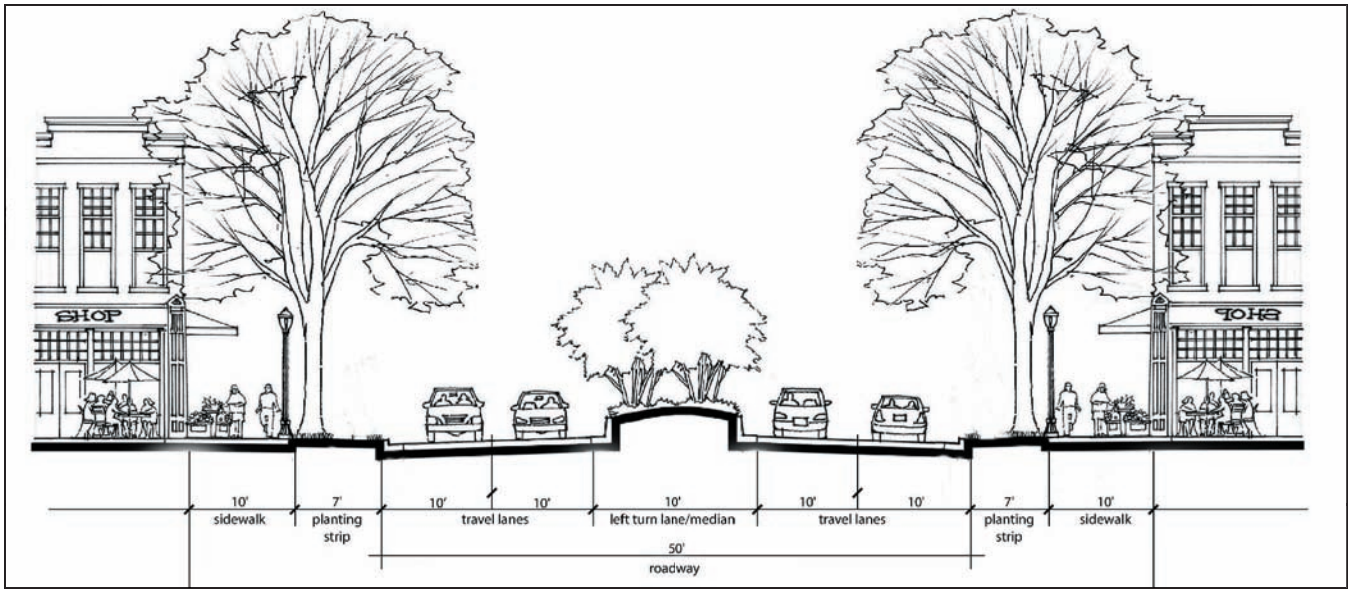
  Moreland Avenue should provide two north and southbound through lanes from I-20 north. The current third lane drops at Memorial Drive and is of no value to through traffic. Its conversion to a left turn lane at intersections, alternating with a median where no turns occur, could improve northbound operations by removing left turns from through traffic. It would also improve the pedestrian environment and aesthetics.

- Conduct a warrant study to gauge the need for a traffic signal at DeKalb Avenue and Hurt Street. (MT-29)

- Install traffic signal at DeKalb Avenue and Hurt Street. (MT-49)

- Close the Arkwright Place northern slip lane. (MT-22)

Figure 3.25: *Proposed section south of Hardee Street to Arkwright Place*



The intersection at Arkwright Place is complicated by the existence of a small slip lane remaining from the streetcar line that passed through here. The high number of accidents at Memorial Drive and Moreland Avenue also include this adjacent signalized intersection at Arkwright Place, which is only 100 feet away. The closeness of the signals exacerbates confusion and the anomalous slip lane only adds to it

- Develop signal timing coordination plans. (MT-26)
- Install mast arm traffic signal poles as part of streetscape. (MT-1, MT-2, MT-3, MT-4)

  See Pedestrian Recommendations for details.
- Install signs to provide directional information to interstates, major streets and commercial nodes, such as Little Five Points, Virginia-Highland, or East Atlanta Village. (MT-43)
- Target the Study Area for traffic law enforcement. (MO-12)
- Implement existing traffic calming plans in Inman Park and Edgewood. (MT-37, MT-38)
- Construct a parking deck in Little Five Points. (MO-4)

  The deck could be in the low area between Moreland and Euclid Avenues and would be hidden from view. It could have access from both avenues. On Moreland Avenue, a drive may warrant a traffic signal at some future time.
- Perform signal upgrades. (MT-26)

  One of the most effective ways to improve traffic operations without road widening is through enhanced signal coordination and timing. This is not intended to increase vehicle speeds; improved signal timing creates a coordinated progression of a platoon of vehicles to travel the corridor at a predetermined speed, which is often less than the posted speed limit. The existing equipment for the traffic signals on Ponce de Leon Avenue is last generation's. Replacement of the hardware, including LED traffic signal heads, using the latest advances in video detection, installing the current industry standard controllers, and upgrading the interconnect to fiber optic, can position the corridor to maximize traffic efficiencies.

Figure 3.26: *Possible layout of a proposed Little Five Points parking deck*

Figure 3.27: *Map showing general locations where bus stop should be provided under the enhanced scenario*

Transit Recommendations

Moreland Avenue was developed around trolleys, yet today's transit service is mediocre, at best. Recommendations are aimed at improving current service in a conservative and cost effective manner, while laying the foundation for future upgrades.

Transit Policies

- Recognize that enhanced bus service (see below) could be a pre-cursor to potential light rail or trolley service implemented as part of the MARTA Inner Core/C-Loop Study.
- Require new bus shelters to be located in the street furniture and tree planting zone of the sidewalk, rather than blocking the clear zone.

Transit Projects

- Create enhanced bus service along the corridor. (MT-28)

  Enhanced bus service strives to make existing buses operate more like trains. It includes reducing the number of stops and constructing shelters at remaining stops, including seating, schedules, maps, and trash cans. It also includes implementing mandatory stops at all stops. Where proposed stops are within a deceleration lane, they should be located at the start of the lane, to allow cars to pass them to turn right.

  Enhanced service improves the bus experience for riders by making buses more reliable, easier to understand, and more efficient. The mandatory stops means that buses take the same amount of time to travel a corridor regardless of whether 5 people ride or 50. It also ensures new riders that buses will stop for them, should they not understand how to signal for a stop.

- Implement a bus signal prioritization program as part of signal upgrades. (MT-26)
- Extend MARTA bus route #48 service from Moreland Avenue to the North Avenue MARTA station via Freedom Parkway, Highland Avenue and Ponce de Leon Avenue. (MT-31)

  As part of recent service modifications route #48 was discontinued north of DeKalb Avenue. This is likely due to poor ridership along the suburban areas of Briarcliff Road.

  Extending the route to Ponce de Leon Avenue and the North Avenue rail station would connect Ponce de Leon Avenue to

Minimal Bus Improvements Increase Ridership in Arlington County, Virginia

New Urban News
January/February 2004
page 24

Last fall, ridership on a Metrobus route in Arlington County, Virginia, suddenly jumped 30 percent. The reason? At 22 bus stops on the route, the county installed displays of the bus schedule and a laminated drawing of the bus route overlaid on a local street map.

"We had people stopping to read the schedules while we were putting them up," James R. Hamre, the county's transit program coordinator, told the *Washington Post*.

Basic bus information like this can attract potential riders. The display boxes cost the county $76 each.

In Germany enhanced bus service provides a user-friendly system

Moreland Avenue and fill a critical transit need. It would also provide greater bus headways along Ponce de Leon Avenue between Peachtree Street and North Highland Avenue - the area where transit demand is the greatest due to the most transit-supportive land use patterns.

- Change the Proctor Creek rail line terminus from King Memorial to the Edgewood/Candler Park station. (MT-32)
- Route southbound buses on Brantley Street. (MT-41)

  This will reduce the need for the free-right turn lane on Seaboard Avenue and provide better transit access to future redevelopment along the west side of Moreland Avenue. Northbound buses will continue to turn left at Moreland Avenue and Seaboard Avenue.
- Move MARTA bus route #6 to the north bus bay of the Edgewood/Candler Park station. (MT-34)
- Install light cutoffs at MARTA parking to prevent light spillage. (MO-5)
- Encourage MARTA to update rail announcements to reflect service changes. (MT-40)
- Provide neighborhood maps in both stations. (MT-39)
- Work with Sembler to implement the Edgewood Retail District shuttle route shown on the next page.
- Improve accessibility to Inman Park/Reynoldstown station with a new bridge and station entrance, and a future connection to transit-oriented development. (MT-33)

  Due to the development of the Edgewood Retail District to the southeast across Moreland Avenue from the Inman Park Station there is a need to improve pedestrian access to the station from the southeast quadrant. Since the Inman Park/Reynoldstown station is the closest station to the development, it needs to have its orientation, which is currently to the far western end of the platform, augmented with eastern pedestrian access.

  This could be built in phases and begin as a simple staircase and elevator at the first bend on the southern bridge. Later phases could include a new bridge and turnstiles at the eastern end of the station platforms to both or one side of the tracks. A final phase may include an extension to the east and a new bus bay terminal and turn around on the City of Atlanta property near the power substation.

  A MARTA station sign should be built on Moreland Avenue to increase visibility, and streetscapes upgraded on Seaboard

Figure 3.28: *Locally preferred circulator route*

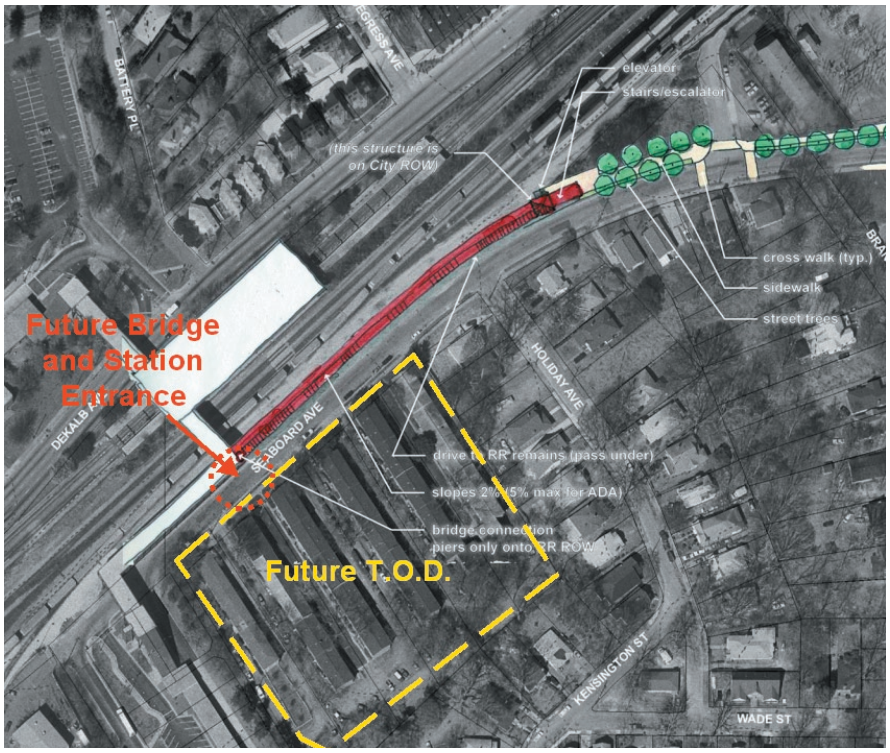


Figure 3.29: *Proposed modifications to the south side of the Inman Park/ Reynoldstown MARTA rail station*

Avenue.

See diagram on next page for conceptual layout.

Pedestrian Recommendations

The pedestrian system should be improved in the Study Area. The following recommendations are intended to encourage walking along the corridor.

Pedestrian Policies

- Adopt the Georgia Department of Transportation *Pedestrian and Streetscape Guide* and *Traffic Signal Design Guidelines* as the design guides for the City of Atlanta. (MO-6)
- Ensure that all sidewalks and ramps are compliant with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

  Sidewalks must maintain a consistent sidewalk clear zone cross slope (maximum 2%), even at driveways.
- Require all portions of public street-serving sidewalks, even when their width extends onto private property, to be held to the same design and accessibility standards as the portion within the public right-of-way.

  Current practice by some City of Atlanta departments allows